SPEECHES

OF

JAMES LOSH, Esq.,

AND

THE REV. WILLIAM KNIBB,

ON THE IMMEDIATE ABOLITION

OF

British Colonial Slavery;

DELIVERED AT A

PUBLIC MEETING

HELD IN

BRUNSWICK-PLACE CHAPEL, NEWCASTLE,

On Wednesday, January 30, 1833.

THE RIGHT WORSHIPFUL JOHN BRANDLING, Esq.,
MAYOR OF NEWCASTLE, IN THE CHAIR.

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(From the Monmouth Courant of Feb. 9, 1832.)

We last week adverted to the interesting public meeting held on Wednesday se'nnight, at Brunswick-place Chapel, in this town, on the subject of West India Slavery, and, amongst others, briefly noticed the addresses of the Rev. Messrs Ward and Mortimer, whose sentiments are now so well known to the public, through their writings, as to excuse us, we trust, from giving their observations at greater length. The Rev. Mr Fleming also spoke on the occasion, and adduced a number of facts, evincing the amiable disposition, the susceptibility of education, and the shrewd sentimental qualities of the African race. The Rev. James Pringle, (who at the public breakfast given to Messrs Carey and Knibb, in the Music Hall, on the morning of the same day, spoke with much effect on the arduous and important duties of missionaries,) afterwards addressed the meeting, and quoted the authority of medical gentlemen, civilians, and officers of the army, in confirmation of the facts detailed by Mr Knibb. He then denounced the sale of the late Mr Smith, missionary at Demerara, as one of legal injustice; and proceeded to describe the mode of flogging slaves, as purposely contrived to aggravate human suffering. Slavery, he said, was permitted in England, during the 15th century, it being carried on to the greatest extent at Bristol, from whence children were sold in such numbers to the Irish, that in 1103, the authorities of Armagh passed an act expressly prohibiting their importation. The traffic was finally routed out of this country by the spread of religious knowledge; and we now boast of our free institutions as examples to surrounding nations, whilst we have anomalously refused their extension to our own colonies. In conclusion, he proposed a resolution, to the

effect that the Duke of Northumberland and several other noble lords and gentlemen, should be invited to support the prayer of the petition; adding, that he thought the noblemen of the land would add greater lustre to their coronets, if they were found among the ranks of the people, advocating this important and interesting cause. Messrs W. S. Batson, John Fenwick, Jonathan Priestman, A. Clapham, J. Bruce, and M. Forster, also took part in the proceedings; but we are obliged to decline entering into further particulars, for the purpose of inserting, at greater length, the speeches of James Losh, Esq. and the Rev. W. Knibb,—the former on proposing, and the latter on seconding, the following resolutions:—

On a motion by James Losh, Esq., seconded by W. S. Batson, Esq.,

It was unanimously resolved,—That the system of British West India Slavery, originally founded in wrong, and since maintained by oppression and cruelty, is not only revolting to our feelings as men, but a most grievous sin in the sight of Almighty God, who has made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on the face of the earth.

On a motion by the Rev. V. Ward, seconded by the Rev. W. Knibb,

It was unanimously resolved,—That whether we view this most accursed system as a source of misery to the Slave, as a sink of moral corruption and defilement to the Planter, or as a stain of the foulest dye on the national character, sound policy, as well as religion, demands its immediate, utter, and final extinction.

SPEECHES, &c.

JAMES LOSH, Esq.—Mr Mayor;—Sir,—Though I had not the honour to be one of the gentlemen who signed the requisition requesting you to preside over this meeting,—an omission which arose entirely from an accidental circumstance,—yet in the name of the gentlemen who did address you to that effect, I beg to return their thanks for the kind manner in which you acceded to their wishes, and consented to attend here this day. This place, Sir, was thought admirably suited for the purpose of therein holding a great public meeting; it was considered more convenient, more accommodating, and likely to be more useful to the object we all have in view, than the place in which public meetings of the inhabitants of this town are usually held. As I have already said, you acceded to the requisition addressed to you with this intention; and by so doing you have conferred a very important benefit upon all those persons who feel so deeply interested in the subject of West India Slavery (applause). It is certainly a matter of no slight consequence that a meeting of this description,—called together, as we are, to deliberate on a question which is likely deeply to agitate the public mind,—should be presided over by the chief magistrate of the place in which it is held. It confers, if possible, additional dignity and importance upon things which, of themselves, in point of dignity and importance, yield to none on earth (applause). It is also an assurance that a spirit of tranquillity will pervade whatever we do; for though I trust that none of the gentlemen around me will either act unwisely or use improper language on this subject, still, Sir, I consider that the presence of a person of your high public character, and standing in the situation you occupy, offers the best guarantee that every thing will be conducted with the utmost decorum and propriety (applause). The object of our present meeting, Sir, is one of the greatest importance that the human mind can conceive. It is a question which has agitated this country and the world for a great number of years, and it is of no less consequence, than whether many of our fellow-creatures shall be

negros are possessed of liberty, the planters cannot, surely, object to our wishing to see that liberty founded on law, and secured to them by proper regulations, from which no legal subtlety can find the means to deviate. And if the negros are slaves, then according to their own principles, in acting up to which they call us theorists, their masters ought to set them free. But how is this to be done? I shall probably be answered, in such a way as not to produce any bad effects. Undoubtedly it ought: and I am of opinion that government is best qualified to make such arrangements as will produce the good effects that are desirable. Wherever the Christian religion has spread, slavery has gradually disappeared. It is the very nature of that sacred dispensation to remove those three great prominent evils which have ever in their progress involved the ruin of mankind—I mean, in the first place, War, which is contrary to all the principles of Christianity, and which has been kept up in a great measure by slavery; secondly, it is calculated to destroy Slavery itself, which is the root and cause of most of the mischief and misery in the world; and, thirdly, to frustrate the degradation of woman, and raise the female sex, for all good purposes, to an equality with the other. These three great evils, Christianity has ever tended to subdue, at the same time that it promoted their extremes of good, which it will, I trust, carry to still greater perfection (applause). Yes, it is said, all this is very good; but how is the extinction of slavery to be beneficially accomplished? I answer, by immediate emancipation only (loud applause). Though attended by precautionary measures, the change I seek for may justly be called immediate. For what have we been about during the last 40 or 50 years? Have any steps been taken towards negro emancipation? If not, who has been in fault? The question has been brought forward a hundred times in parliament, and the attention of the British public has for many years been directed to it. All kinds of regulations and suggestions have been proposed by wise and prudent men for its safe and gradual settlement. And if the planters, during this long period, have not improved the opportunities placed at their disposal, and prepared their slaves for freedom, is it not high time that other persons should take the matter into their own hands? (Loud applause.) I should be the last person on this or any other occasion to advocate the adoption of a measure from which danger and confusion might ensue, with certain injury to the very individuals on whose account that measure was to be taken. But I am certain that no danger can arise from immediate abolition, if it be properly conducted. I do not mean to say that the slaves should be set free without precautionary measures being taken before-hand, to prevent mischief and confusion. I do not say that such a proceeding would be safe; but I do mean to say, that in the present state of the West Indian islands, particularly Jamaica—for that is the colony which agitates all minds—the best and wisest thing that can be done, even for the planters themselves, is to adopt

immediate emancipation (great applause). But whether with the will and inclination of the West India planters or not, that great step of national justice must be taken (applause). Already does a knowledge of religious principles prevail among the negros to a considerable extent. The time has arrived when their minds will no longer submit to the thraldom of slavery; and any attempt to perpetuate the evil on the part of the planters would be to rush headlong to destruction, and to involve thousands of our fellow-creatures in a degree of misery dreadful to contemplate: for it has been well said that "a little knowledge is a dangerous thing," and if not followed up by general knowledge it must produce bad effects; but if knowledge goes on, step by step, with liberty for its object, happiness must be its consequence. Now though knowledge may not have spread to the full extent one could wish, it has been so far attained, that it is quite impossible to stay where we are We must, therefore, go on with the work of emancipation, or prepare ourselves for results too horrible for human nature to imagine (applause). But we are told that this would be a direct infringement upon private property. I think otherwise. I believe that every acquisition of moral and religious feeling by the great body of the slaves, must be for the advantage of the planters themselves. I do not mean to say, that there will be no cases in which loss has been sustained by the masters, and in which some compensation may be fairly given; and whenever such cases occur, of sacrifices having been made in carrying manumission into effect, I trust the public will be prepared to make up the loss; but it is for the sufferers from the measure, if there be any, to prove this. We must assume, *prima facie*, that the slaves are free: if any injury accrue in consequence, it is for the injured party to prove it, and then we will talk of compensation. Such is my view of the case; and I ought to add, as my firm conviction prompts me to do, that the slaves employed in rearing cotton and sugar cost their masters, in point of fact, more money than free labour would do. I believe this; and it was proved before a late committee of the House of Commons that slaves are perfectly unable, both from the turn of their minds, and from their miserable situation, to compete in any shape with the free labourer. I do not mean to say that every individual planter would find this; but if free labour were established immediately in the West Indies, and particularly in Jamaica, I believe that the employers would be quite competent to carry on the business of the country at a cheaper rate than they now carry it on by means of slaves. Observe, that I am now treating the question as one merely of commerce or of manufacture, in which light I am scarcely called upon to consider a question of such great moral importance. But I thought it best to endeavour to remove the impression that emancipation would prove injurious to the planter's interest, which has always been a powerful stumbling-block in the way of reaching the truth of this matter. What I have said, I have advanced on no light grounds.

Evidence taken before both houses of parliament will, if I mistake not, fully bear me out. I confess that I have had doubts passing through my mind as to the expediency of sudden abolition; because I was afraid that my friends, who maintain the absolute necessity of such a decision being come to, did not think that before the slaves were declared free, proper police regulations, and even a powerful military force if necessary, should be provided before-hand, together with commissioners, who should be sent out to investigate and digest what steps it were best to take to secure the personal freedom and future subsistence of the emancipated slave, and the property of his late employer. I say, I was afraid that this was not the way in which my friends wished the work of emancipation to be carried into effect: but last night I had the pleasure of meeting with a gentleman who satisfied me on these points; for though an uncompromising advocate of immediate manumission, he was of opinion that these regulations might be so arranged as to be acceptable to both planters and slaves, and yet produce the end which all men so ardently desire—immediate emancipation, effected by means which will afford protection against the dangers but too incident to human nature, overcome old prejudices, and restore society to a healthy state (loud applause). I have great satisfaction in thinking that this is the view which the gentlemen who surround me take of this measure. Let us declare, then, as soon as parliament meets for transacting business, our earnest desire that an end should be put to slavery throughout the whole of the British dominions, and that hereafter no such being as a slave should exist, not in Great Britain and Ireland only, but throughout the whole of our colonial possessions (applause). Let us request parliament to do this; but at the same time to neglect no measures of precaution necessary for the protection of all the parties interested, during, to adopt the phraseology of natural history, the "transition state." And thus, by watching carefully over the whole, with the aid of an efficient police, all may be done safely and well. In this sense only, but most truly, am I a friend to immediate emancipation, and I trust the ideas of those who listen to me herein correspond with my own. If so, let us, hand in hand, mutually travel towards the same conclusion, and declare that immediate emancipation is the object we all have in view, and that we will not rest night nor day until that object is accomplished. Thus the great end of our exertions will be obtained by wise and humane means, through the operation of which it can alone be effectually secured (loud applause).—Sir, I must beg pardon for having trespassed so long upon your attention. I meant merely to state broadly the outlines of this great and important question: its details will be filled up by other gentlemen much better than I can pretend to do. All I wish is, that we should support government steadily and firmly, in calling upon them, in the name of the nation, to propose the immediate emancipation of all the slaves in the British colonies,—that is, without ceasing, without stopping. It would

be to wrong the public characters of the great men who form the present administration, to doubt their anxiety to meet the feeling of the nation on this subject; and whilst I naturally refer you to them, I fear nothing on their account, for in their hands the question seems to me to be perfectly safe (applause). I remember that on the question of abolishing the slave trade, the same opposition was made, the same arguments used, the same species of—I will not say abuse—but the same harshness of expression employed towards the advocates of that measure, by its opponents, as have been brought into action at the present day. I well remember these things—I recollect, for instance, that it was said Jamaica would be lost to us if the slave trade were abolished: and that a petition was presented to the House of Commons, declaring that the instant this trade was withdrawn, not a ship would navigate the seas, and the liberties of our country would be gone! (Laughter and applause.) It is now said that the property of the planters in their slaves was guaranteed by acts of parliament. And so it was. But that is no reason why their claim should not be abolished. Many well-meaning acts intended to secure the interests of the country have been passed, which the altered circumstances of the people have rendered it necessary to repeal. Many things were formerly tolerated or overlooked, which we now treat not merely as matters of offence, but as worthy of the severest punishment. And thus, in spite of clamour and abuse on the part of the West India interest, the altered state of public feeling in this country, and the changes in the condition of the colonies, have rendered necessary the abrogation of the laws which entitled them to the possession of slaves, even though private interest should suffer by their repeal. Another objection urged at that time was, that Liverpool would be ruined. But let me ask, did Liverpool lose her importance when the slave trade was abolished? Did her ships vanish from the sea—I had almost said from off the earth (laughter). On the contrary, the town doubled in point of population, and tripled in importance. And what will be the consequences of abolishing slavery altogether? I may not hope to see it, but I am perfectly persuaded that shortly after such a blessed consummation, Jamaica will become a flourishing colony, and ultimately, it may be, a free state. For what is its nature? It is fertile and beautiful in the extreme, and capable of maintaining, with every species of food, from three to four millions of persons, if peopled as it ought to be, with blacks, or whites, or browns, or any other colour, who, each man having the comforts and conveniences of life, would work to increase and maintain them; thus making the island supply the wants of a community of persons, instead of its being overburthened, as some good people anticipate, with three or four hundred thousand: and thus raising up a population who would take what we had to give, and give us what we want.—As to the white population being in danger from the negros, in the event of their emancipation, I do not believe any such thing. Thirty years ago, we were threatened with a similar evil, on the suppression of the carrying trade in slaves. At that

time Pitt, in the full vigour of his administration, shrank before the powerful anti-abolition interest which assailed him, and thereby left a blot upon his character. Fortunately for the country, the great man who succeeded him, Mr Fox, with a much feebler administration, achieved that great conquest over prejudice and error; and dying soon afterwards, the last thing upon his mind was, that he had set free his country from that detestable traffic (loud applause). Fortunately for the country, once more, he was succeeded in power, if not in place, by our present prime minister, who finally completed the great measure of his predecessor: and may God grant,—for I trust it will be so—that he may achieve the still greater glory of setting the country free altogether from the curse of slavery (great applause). If he accomplish this great object, he will have filled a greater space in the moral feelings of mankind than ever fell to the lot of an individual. For what will be the result of its completion? The progress of freedom will not be stopped—the example will not be lost. If we liberate our slaves, can we doubt that North America will do the same? If the good deed be achieved by us, it will be a strong argument for the Americans to follow our example—for it will tend to promote their interests, a species of argument which they understand as well as any men. I will venture to assume, then, that the United States will follow in our footsteps; and let but Great Britain and America achieve this victory of humanity over prejudice, error, and cruelty, and the lesser States must adopt the same line of conduct; so that, at no distant day, we may hope to see freedom in the possession of every man in every nation, and slavery driven from the face of the earth (loud applause). Sir, I shall not trouble you further. The subject is inviting; and I might proceed with some further remarks, as I am an old enemy to the but too long-lived system. But at present I shall conclude with the beautiful reflection—"Disguise thyself as thou wilt, still, Slavery, still thou art a bitter draught; and though thousands (which let us hope will not long be the case) in all ages have been made to taste of thee, thou art not the less bitter on that account." Mr Losh sat down amidst very great applause, after reading the first resolution.

The Rev. W. Knibb.—Mr Chairman, I rise with much pleasure to second the resolution which has been moved by my respected friend, and which reads thus:—"That whether we view this most accursed system as a source of misery to the slave, as a sink of moral corruption and defilement to the planter, or as a stain of the foulest dye on the national character, sound policy, as well as religion, demands its immediate, utter, and final extinction." In appearing before this very respectable audience, I shall claim from them a few moments of their patient attention, whilst I direct their notice to a few scenes and incidents, most of which have fallen under my own

observation. There is nothing more delightful and interesting than to plead the cause of the injured, the degraded, and the oppressed. This, under any circumstances, is peculiarly delightful; but it is especially so when the speaker finds himself surrounded by so large a number of his fellow-christians, who he feels assured never hear of misery but they endeavour to remove it; who never hear of sorrow, but they are anxious to dry the mourner's tears; and who never hear of oppression, but every feeling of their hearts rises up in just and holy indignation against the person who inflicts it. I feel that it is under the influence of such circumstances I now stand before you; and in coming forward as the humble but ardent advocate of the oppressed African's cause, I think it due to myself, and to the cause I have undertaken, explicitly to state that I am not in any shape an agent of the Anti-Slavery Society, though I most cordially and sincerely partake in its desire to effect the instant emancipation of our suffering countrymen. I have thought it necessary to make this remark, because a certain portion of the public press has insinuated that, under the garb of a Christian missionary, I am the paid agent of the Anti-Slavery Society, and that I am doing my utmost endeavours to effect the ruin of the colonies. I assure you once more that this is not the case; and I also request you to believe that pecuniary interest shall never influence my feelings on a question of humanity and justice. (Applause.)—I view slavery in the light of a great moral evil, which insults the majesty of God in heaven, which degrades to the level of the brute the noblest qualities of our nature, and the evil consequences of which I pray God to avert from the nation to which I have the honour to belong. As such I attack this source of moral defilement—as such, in the strength of truth, I hope to overcome it. (Loud applause.) In the word of God it is written, the oppressed shall go free; and it concerns every one interested in the welfare of man to lessen the evils of his fellow-creatures, and do every thing in his power to provide for their temporal and spiritual advantage. It is on this principle I have stepped out from what may be deemed my proper sphere as a Christian minister, for the purpose of laying before the British public the actual condition of 800,000 of their British fellow-subjects. I know it has been said, that this is a question which should be left to politicians. But I answer, that slavery has crossed the path of Christian missions, by which I am happy to think its progress has been arrested, and the solemn assurance given "thus far shalt thou go, and no further,"—an assurance which has been ratified by the full, uplifted voice of a free people. (Applause.) When we advocate the cause of immediate emancipation, it is necessary that the principles on which we act should be fully made known, and the means we propose clearly developed. Sir, I declare myself the undaunted advocate of the immediate and entire emancipation of every slave in the British dominions; but by immediate emancipation I mean the realization of that blessing

as soon as it can be effected by legislative enactments, securing to the slave an equality of right with his fellow-men, without interrupting the welfare and tranquillity of the colonies.—I do not mean, that the slave should be set loose from all salutary restraint, without heed to the preservation of social order. He cannot thus be free. The same law that protects the innocent must punish the guilty, and have a strictly impartial operation with respect to the labourers in the West Indies. If the manumitted slave do wrong, let him be punished; if right, let him be protected on the same principle. If he violate the laws passed for his necessary control, and not less necessary protection, let him be imprisoned and corrected in proportion to his offence; but if he be willing to work, instead of being flogged let him be paid for his labour as he ought to be. (Great applause.) It is no argument, however, against immediate emancipation to say that the slave is habitually idle; and that if he were set free, he would not work, but become listless and inactive,—a burden to himself and upon all around him. This reasoning, though very specious, is but hypothetical at the best. No person can tell what a man will do, until he is placed in the situation in which it is presumed he would not do certain things. We cannot anticipate what a free man will do, until he is made free. We must argue in this case from the character of those who have been set at liberty under similar circumstances: and it is to such character I will make my appeal this afternoon, with your kind permission (applause). I am well aware that in opposition to our demands of immediate emancipation, the case of St. Domingo is generally adduced in proof that the slaves are averse to work, and that anarchy, confusion, and bloodshed, must follow the bestowment of liberty upon them. But if there is any part of the world to which I like to go for a new light on this subject, it is to this injured and much calumniated island, where I find that free men not only will, but actually do work, and provide themselves with the comforts, and even the luxuries, of life. In the published evidence of Admiral Fleming, taken before a parliamentary committee in July, 1832, that gentleman said he knew the state of the island and of the people of St. Domingo; and on being asked whether he had seen much begging in the streets, he replied, that he never did; every body was anxious to work, and meat was sold so low as 2d. per lb., whilst in Jamaica it is as high as 1s. per lb. In answer to another question,—did every person appear to be living comfortably in St. Domingo? the admiral said,—"Yes; the most happy, the richest, and the best fed blacks I ever saw, were in Hayti and St. Domingo." With respect to the Bahamas, he said he had possessed opportunities of observing the sort of comfort prevailing among the free population of these islands; and he found they had made considerable advances in civilization: beds were seen in every cottage, and the cooking utensils and general appearance of the houses were of a description which led him to infer that the comforts

of the people were obtained by industry and good management. On being asked whether he ever witnessed a disposition among the free negros to return to the habits of savage life, the gallant officer replied that he never saw or heard of their entertaining any such desire. Robert Sutherland, Esq., in his evidence (pp. 224-5 of the published reports), speaking of the disposition and civilized habits of the manumitted slaves, declares it to be his opinion that, so mild is the general character of the natives, no police force is necessary to maintain subordination among them. He had known very few instances of petty thefts, at which he was much surprised: he could not have expected that emancipated negros would be so mild in disposition, and so orderly in demeanour, as he found them. In page 184, we find that the Rev. Mr. Austin, having been asked if the free negros in Surinam were not chargeable with drunken, idle habits, replied, that after an intimate acquaintance with them, though he had heard of such a thing, he never saw one of them the slightest in liquor. I shall now go to America for a few moments, where, at Albany, and other parts of the state of New York, 10,000 slaves were emancipated in one day, and yet we are told, on the testimony of Mr Nath. Paul, that not a single instance of disorder occurred, for the common parent of all, blessed the work which benevolence had achieved and justice demanded. The next instance I shall mention is that of the crown slaves, who were recently set free by order of his Majesty's government to the number of about 2000. Respecting a portion of these, the governor of Antigua wrote to the following effect in May, 1830, 5 months after their liberation:—"It affords me much satisfaction to have the honour of reporting, that during a period of 5 months, which has expired since they were set at large, I have not received a single complaint against them; nor has one of them been committed by a magistrate for the most trifling offence. There has not, to my knowledge, been any application from them on the score of poverty; and they appear to be, in general, industriously occupied in providing for their own livelihood." Another gentleman (whose name we did not catch) referring to the conduct of the free negros of St. John, said it was notorious that the most of the labour and work done in that town was performed by them; they were fishermen, mariners,—in short, they engaged in every species of labour. The next case to which I shall refer is that of 130 negros, who fled from all the comforts of slavery, and took refuge amidst all the miseries of civilised life. (Laughter and applause.) They fled from Martinique to St. Lucia, when that island was under the government of Mr Jeremy, and were represented as poisoners, incendiaries, and dealers in sedition and rebellion, this character, when they came over, having come along with them. A portion of them immediately set to work, and made various articles of crockery ware, by which means they provided for themselves, and eat and drank the fruits of their labour; and the rest made themselves useful in other ways. This happened, too, let it be observed,

where a strict police watch was set over them, yet not a single instance of bad conduct was observable on their parts; and when any of the body fell sick, the rest willingly supported and fed him. Now this is surely an argument, or rather a decisive proof, that if the slaves are idlers, licentious, incendiaries, and poisoners when they are in bondage, what noble men they become the moment they are set free. (Loud applause.) But if they are not idlers, incendiaries, and poisoners, then have the planters told a lie; and I can tell them, that on the horns of this dilemma they must hang, and bear the scorn and derision of mankind, until their brother planters come and take them down. Sir, it has been the happiness of him who addresses you to see free negros work; and not only did they work steadily and well, but they thereby raised themselves to respectable stations in society. Such instances may, indeed, be deemed comparatively few; but it should be remembered that neither are the manumissions many. They are as numerous, I believe, as the number emancipated. Many persons are now living in Jamaica who were once in a state of slavery. Perhaps it may be said, "Yes, but these are the children of white men, whose behaviour has been so much better than ordinary, that it has obtained freedom for them." I answer, that they are not the children of white men; they are men whose faces are as black as a slave-owner's heart (applause). I knew a negro named Brown, who purchased his own freedom by his exertions as a carpenter; and by dint of hard work afterwards purchased the liberty of his wife for 80l. He then bought a piece of ground, erected a comfortable house, and took his aged mother under his care, whom he supported during a long illness, and gave her a decent funeral at her death. Another, called Sam Swinney, having procured his freedom, built himself a small house, and when his wife was put up for sale he got a friend to advance him some money to effect her release; but a dead set being made against him, he was unsuccessful, and he now pays 10s. per week for permission to have his wife to cook his victuals for him. This leads me to notice some other peculiarities among the slaves of the West Indies, particularly those of Jamaica. Notwithstanding all that has been said of their dislike to hard work, it is well known that they support themselves and their masters too. There are a thousand slaves in Jamaica, who, for the trifling boon of going where they like, and doing what kind of work they please, pay two pounds per month to their masters, and support themselves into the bargain. The slave procures a paper authorising his free disposal of himself for one month, and for that paper he pays 2l., which he works hard to make up, and does make up, independent of his own subsistence; and yet we are told that these men do not want their liberty! There are many, with whom I was personally acquainted, who not only do this, but who pay the like sum for permission to have their wives free also, during this period; for such a favour is in no case granted under ordinary circumstances. Thus we

frequently find the man we call a slave paying 2l. per month for his own liberty, and 10s. per week for his wife—providing, at the same time, meat, drink, and clothing for himself and family: and thus the negro who works hard, has sometimes the means of making himself respectable, and is not entirely under the control of that being who impiously calls himself his owner. But, as I have already intimated, if the number of slaves thus willing to exert themselves be but few, that is no argument against immediate emancipation. Make them free men, and then, and then only, will it be seen how much better they will behave in the state for which nature intended them, and to enjoy which they were created. It is not long since a Virginian slave was so reckless in his conduct that he was considered the most worthless character the place afforded. His friends tried every means to cure him of his vicious habits, but nothing would do: chains, flogging, imprisonment—all were unavailing in bringing him to a sense of propriety. At last, two religious persons, unconnected with the property he belonged to, saw him, and adopted every likely means for his reformation, but when they expostulated with him on his unruly demeanour, he said—"You know nothing about it;—make me a man, and you see what me will do." Well, they took him at his word; he was considered so absolutely incorrigible that a few dollars bought him; and he is now, almost without exception, the most honest and industrious free labourer in that part of the world (loud applause). The next argument we hear of is, that the slaves will starve. Did you ever hear of cattle or sheep starving where there was plenty of good pasture land? It is just as likely that the negro will starve in the West Indies. Our common parent has so bountifully shed his blessings over these islands, that if only a very ordinary degree of industry be exercised, it is impossible to starve. Starve! Why who supports him now? Himself undoubtedly. By the laws of Jamaica, the slave is allowed twenty-six days in the year, that is every alternate Sunday, to work his slip of ground; he is also allowed a salt herring every day, and a little flesh at Christmas. But to say from this that he is supported by his owner, is quite absurd. He is not —he cannot be so. I challenge the apologists of the system to deny this if they can. I hold in my hand a writing containing the laws which ordain what I have stated. I am justified and borne out, then, in affirming the painful fact, that in the present state of our colonies the slaves must work every other Sunday, or starve. And this I say not merely on my own testimony; for I am confirmed in it by that of J. B. Wildman, Esq., himself a slave-owner, who has declared that he thinks it impossible to impart religious instruction to the slave under existing circumstances, for he must either work on the Sunday, or starve. The free slave starve, indeed! Then why don't the free people now on the islands starve? Why because they cultivate the soil, and the earth yields them an ample subsistence. The fact is, that a horticultural society has been established in Jamaica,

and the free negro is often the successful competitor, and bears off the prize in triumph. Starve! I really cannot help iterating the expression. Starve, forsooth! Why they not only provide provisions for themselves and their families, but for every being in the colonies! It is the slave who, after the labours of the day, hies away to his ground, and cultivates it for his own subsistence, and the sustenance of the white population. (Applause.) Another assertion which our opponents do not scruple to make is, that if the blacks are manumitted they will murder the whites! So true it is, Sir, that the "wicked flee when no man pursueth: while the righteous is as bold as a lion." But it is well known that the sugar estates are not near towns, nor barracks, nor in the vicinity of a free population. The plantations are in the country, each one having about 300 negros on it, and over these 300 negros are placed 6 white persons, and 6 only. Every slave carries about him a large knife, the blade of which is as long as my arm, for cutting the cane during some portion of his work. Yet these 6 persons sleep in security, surrounded by 300 men thus armed and thus treated, and never dread the possibility of harm. Now, bringing plain common sense to the inquiry, I would ask you, is it probable, is it natural, is it possible that any man or body of men would injure you when you benefit them, if they will not do so when you oppress them.? Another argument against negro emancipation is, that there are too many of them. It must be confessed however that under the present system this ground of apprehension will not long be tenable. I know one parish in which the population has decreased 1394,—such is the depopulating effect of the treatment to which the slaves are subjected. In round numbers, the whole slave population throughout all our colonies does not exceed 800,000, of whom there are about 300,000 and some odd in the Island of Jamaica, not quite, I will venture to say, so closely packed as the people of England, for the island is 160 miles long and 40 broad. But of this number, it must be considered that one-half is composed of women, and we cannot think so poorly of mankind as to believe that any body is going to fear them. Another large portion of this population is between 6 months and 12 years of age; and I hope nobody is going to fear them. Then there are the old and infirm slaves; but surely no one is going to dread their vengeance. (Laughter and applause.) Neither must we forget that, through the Giver of all Good, the missionaries, though shamefully traduced by a venal and licentious press, have succeeded in making 20,000 slaves christians; and that these were the men who, during the late insurrection in Jamaica, formed a bulwark against the spreading evil, and protected their masters' property, often at the risk of their own lives, declaring that they would perish rather than see it destroyed. It has also been said, that if the slaves are set free, they will leave the island. Now every body knows that the negros are exceedingly attached to the place where their fathers and their forefathers sleep. You cannot sooner injure

their health than by removing them from the spot on which they were brought up. There is no danger, therefore, in this respect; and there is land enough belonging to the crown to maintain them all. I do not know that there are any other arguments which it is necessary for me to refer you to. I advocate immediate emancipation, because it is just. If slavery be a sin, then, as christians, we are called upon to put it down; if it be not a sin, we have no right to touch it at all. If man can claim property in his fellow-man, then have we no right to interfere with it. But, whilst I put this matter, so far, in a hypothetical shape, I do, at the same time, absolutely deny the claim. (Applause.) Man over man God made not lord. The being we call a slave has as much right to the possession of his freedom as the greatest monarch that wields the sceptre. I advocate immediate emancipation, because gradual abolition, which has been long talked of, is indefinite in its nature, and unprogressive towards good results; the cruelties of the system have not been amended by its means, and I firmly believe it will be impossible to amend them; as long as man possesses an irresponsible power over other men, and can buy or sell them like common chattels, slavery never will be abolished, —the slave never will be happy. I have evidence to prove that the punishments inflicted fall little short of those practised by the Inquisition. Stripes are given with a cart whip on the backs and shoulders of females; their flesh is cut as with a knife, and salt and hot spices are rubbed into the wounds. (Hear.) Let those deny this statement who can. I can prove that such things take place almost daily in the island of Jamaica. Nay, we have the evidence of the slave-owners themselves for the fact; for Mr Wildman, whom I have already quoted, in his evidence before the House of Commons, in answer to the question, what are the punishments commonly in use? replied, they were very cruel ones: and on being requested to state the general system, he said, sometimes a long whip was used, every blow of which either lacerated the flesh, or caused a severe contusion; and sometimes an ebony switch, with small myrtle-like leaves, underneath each of which grows a thorn, was applied with dreadful effect: after which the parts injured were rubbed with brine (hear, hear) I also advocate immediate emancipation as the only feasible method of getting rid of the evil. What have we done by our endeavours to effect gradual manumission? What negro will honour us for the attempt? What wife or mother will bless us for restoring to freedom her husband or her children? Not one. Forty years have been spent in this vain endeavour: and we shall continue as far from the mark as ever, until we are able to announce the accomplishment of what justice demands and mercy beseeches—immediate emancipation (loud applause). The idea of gradual emancipation is rapidly losing its hold of the public mind. The people see that the slaves are treated worse instead of better, and their owners impudently turn round and tell us, so towering have become their excessive pride and scorn, that they will

give over the islands to America the moment we attempt to set the negros free. I say, I advocate immediate emancipation as the most feasible method: for if, in pursuing a more determinate system of gradual abolition than has yet been attempted, we take any one estate, and free only twenty of the negros on it, discontent, anarchy, and confusion, would inevitably take place among those left. We may as well tell the negros that the sun does not shine while his burning rays are falling upon their heads, as attempt to persuade them that they are not fit for freedom. And then the twenty whom we had made free, they would not work with slaves. They would feel themselves raised in the scale of society: they would think they had become human beings, and refuse to work with slaves any longer. Try it, and you will find the fact such as I have stated it will be. The free negro will no more work among slaves, knowing that every passer-by takes him to be one, than would a just man break stones upon the high-way in England, if all the stone-breakers were reputed thieves, from a fear that every body who passed in their coaches would set him down for one also. The negro, having once breathed the air of freedom into his lungs, thinks himself from that moment disgraced by the society of slaves, and he will not enter into it. I advocate immediate emancipation, because it is not the first time that question has been mooted. It was spoken of thirty years ago.—The slave has read in your newspapers the speeches in parliament: he knows all the *pros* and *cons*. which affect the matter. He has long panted for that liberty which is the birth-right of every man, and he pants for it still—(applause)—and I will tell you plainly, that if Great Britain do not give him freedom shortly, he will take it of his own accord—(renewed applause). Some spirit will doubtless whisper in his ear, "Know you not, hereditary bondsman, that he who would be free, himself must strike the blow?" I advocate immediate emancipation, because I feel assured that no evil consequences would result from that measure. It is said that the slaves are not fit for it. What, then, I ask, constitutes fitness for freedom? What can make that being unfit for liberty, the love of which nature, at his birth, planted in his breast? Answer me that, and then I will say whether the negro is not fit to be emancipated. We are told that he is licentious. Can the slave's debauchery equal that of the slave-owner? It can be proved to a demonstration that the masters of the slave are infinitely more criminal than himself; their murders, their circumventing cunning, their licentiousness, their cruelty, their swearing, render the slave colonies fit only to stand in comparison with Sodom and Gomorrah of the olden time. The slaves are ten times better men than their owners: torn and lacerated as they are, it is they who uphold our colonial possessions; and that they may be the better qualified to do this, I am determined to hold up the iniquities of the present system before the eyes of England; I am fixedly resolved to do my duty in this respect boldly and fearlessly, despite the

mingled scorn and obloquy with which I may be, as I have been, assailed, until the last shackle shall fall from the hands of the negro, and he shall stand in possession of all the blessings consequent upon civil and religious liberty. (Loud applause.) But we are told that religious instruction should in the first instance, and before we think of manumission, be imparted to the slaves. How is this to be effected? Have not missionaries of every denomination of Christians, dissenters and adherents of the Church of England, been for many years labouring in the slave colonies? And is it not notorious, that the more holy and active have been their endeavours to spread the light of Christianity, the more obnoxious have they become to the slave-owners? The planters have no objections liberally to pay the ministers who are sent out by government to teach the negros, provided they will keep themselves quiet, and not interfere with the purpose they were commissioned to fulfil. Darkness rather than light, is their maxim. I am acquainted with a clergyman of the church of England, whose energy in dispensing the truths of revelation drew upon him every species of opposition, obloquy, and reproach, though I will venture to say that a more excellent minister never trod the shores of Jamaica. God forbid that I should deny the necessity of religious instruction; but I will ever contend that the question of emancipation should not rest upon that issue: for if the slaves once get an idea that it is necessary for them to make loud professions of their religious zeal in order to obtain their freedom, from that moment you make them a nation of hypocrites. They will instantly become religious. If they think that the boon for which they pant will be conferred when they are, as the phrase runs, "fit for it," they will fly to the cross of Christ, and, pretending to worship that holy emblem, make it the stepping stone to the acquirement of their birthright. Let us not, then, run into real to avoid hypothetical dangers. Let us conciliate the slave by bestowing upon him that freedom which he otherwise will speedily, and, in all likelihood, amidst tumult and violence, demand as a right that cannot be alienated from him without the most dreadful consequences; but let us, at the same time, make laws for his moral guidance, and tell him that if he infringe them, he will be punished for the offence. There is one danger, however, which our opponents, with all their affected sensitiveness on this subject, appear to have entirely overlooked. I mean the paramount danger of the West India negros being seduced into crime and disaffection by their former oppressors—by those men who have been so diligent in pulling down Baptist chapels, and in tarring and feathering the missionaries—those men who, in the martial pride of their hearts, have delighted in the flogging of females, and the dissolution of all domestic ties. It cannot be supposed that they will remain idle, or bear their discomfiture with patient submission. No, having lost their own hateful control over him, they will adopt every art to persuade the negro that he suffers wrong from others, and to spread dissa-

tisfaction against the parental government. If a strict police force be in any wise necessary as a salutary check upon the slaves, it is no less necessary to defeat the machinations of their late masters, who will persuade them, notwithstanding their present aspersions of the negro character, that they ought not to work, and then with hellish ingenuity try to destroy the provision made by government for the cultivation of their minds, and the sustenance of their bodies (much approbation). Sir, I really ought to beg pardon for carrying my observations to so great a length; but the subject lies very near my heart. I have seen the uniform kindness of the poor negros—I have witnessed their constant affection—I have felt their disinterested benevolence. In saying this, I will be borne out, I doubt not, by the testimony of every missionary who has been among them, who will agree with me that there is not a kinder race of beings on the face of the earth than the black population of our West Indian islands (applause). When I, along with others, was a prisoner in Jamaica, and every thing seemed dark and mysterious around us, the Christian negros, at every risk to themselves, helped us by their prayers and contributions. I shall never forget the kindness of one of these poor Africans. One day, while yet a prisoner, a young woman came to the place of my confinement, and opening the window, put in a two-dollar piece. "Minister," she said, "me have save this this one long time; me have no picca-ninny, but you have got some. Take this, massa; me thought it best to bring it myself, that other people might not know." (Loud applause). Mark the delicate freedom, the unostentatious benevolence of this poor negro, and then tell me if she be not fit for freedom. Not fit for freedom! I believe that if I sought Newcastle through and through, charitable as the inhabitants of this place are, I should not more than equal her noble conduct. Their fidelity, too, is a strong recommendation to our notice. Notwithstanding the many flagitious instances of base perjury committed by white men against Christian missionaries, not a single slave could ever be induced to say one word against his minister. On all these grounds, therefore, I repeat, that humanity and justice demand, and mercy beseeches, the liberty of our fellow subjects at the hand of government. The question of slavery can no longer be tampered with; the voice of this nation has become roused and united, as if that of one man, in its condemnation; and the Deity himself has said "Let my people go free, that they may worship the Lord their God." (Applause.) And now, to say a few words with reference to the taunts and threats of the slave owners. The planters of Jamaica say they will demand compensation if we set the negro free; and they say this with the view of diverting us from our main object, by reminding us of our pecuniary interests. But when they talk of compensation, let us answer that we will first listen to justice, and afterwards consider if any one have suffered from the act of carrying the commands of justice into effect. They talk of intimidation, too:

but I will tell them that Britons have never been intimidated from accomplishing what they once resolved on, and that certainly they will not be so now. (Loud applause.) I will tell them, that they themselves were not afraid to steal these men, and part the wife from the husband, and the husband from the wife; I will remind them that they dared to tempt the wrath of heaven by polluting the bosom of the sea with their slave ships; and I will tell them further, that if they were not afraid to do these things, we are not afraid of their threats nor their taunts, though we do fear and dread the consequences of withholding the liberty of the slave one single moment longer, by refusing to do unto others, what we would have others do to us. They tell us, also, that if we decide on immediate emancipation, they will refuse allegiance to the authority of Great Britain; that they will quit the colonies, and transfer their property to America: and let them go! But will they consent to leave all those mortgages upon their estates which are held in England? I rather think they are too cunning and too worldly-wise for that. Or perhaps they expect that America will pay off their mortgages; but if they do, they will find themselves much mistaken. And have they reflected, I wonder, that though they may go over to America, they will still leave 40,000 free men on the island? And would these men have no effect over their enslaved brethren? Would they not participate in the sentiments of the King's speeches? Yes, Sir, we should soon see that the 800,000 slaves would join the 40,000 free men, and leave the 18,000 white inhabitants to enjoy the boasted protection of America. Really, the conduct of these slave-owners reminds me of the sturdy beggar, who applied for parochial relief, and threatened the authorities that if they did not relieve him directly, he would go to the next parish. (Laughter and applause.) What a fine flourish it would make in the opening speech of the president of the United States to announce this great accession of strength and influence! What a brilliant star would be added to the studded banner of North American independence! "Gentlemen," the president would be called on to say, "I congratulate you on the addition of 18,000 paupers to our kingdom, and the prospect we have of ultimately adding to them 800,000 slaves." (Laughter and great applause.) Again, we are told that if the slave owner is ruined, the slave will be ruined: and that if the slave colonies are thus destroyed, then falls the noblest empire that ever adorned the world! Why did you ever hear such nonsense—such pure unadulterated stuff as this? (Laughter.) All our trade to the East is nothing; with Brazil it is nothing; with China it is nothing! All the trade of Newcastle and Sunderland in coals is nothing, or less than nothing; for we have the authority of the slave owners for saying, that if a few ships do not go to Jamaica and back again, this country must inevitably fall, and great will be the fall thereof. I really never thought that Great Britain was so near the point of ruin—I never dreamt that the safety of British

property depended upon the keeping of a few thousands of poor Africans in slavery. But, if her existence does depend upon such a foundation, let her fall, I exclaim, rather than owe her prosperity to the degradation of our fellow-men (applause). However, I absolutely deny the inference. Make the slave feel that he possesses the happiness and dignity of man, and he will be infinitely more serviceable to his employers and his country. We are commanded to do justly, to love mercy, and to set the oppressed free; and so long as any nation is desirous to prosper, and to continue lovely in the eyes of God, its people must treat others as they would themselves be treated. "We have no slaves at home, then why abroad?" The moment the foot of the slave presses the soil of Britain, his shackles fall. A slave cannot breathe in England. As soon as our air enters his lungs, from that instant he is free. Spread it, then, among all nations—announce the glad tidings to the world, that

——— "Where Britain's power is felt,
"Mankind shall feel her mercy too!"

(Loud and continued applause.) Sir, I address these sentiments to you, and to this great meeting, not because they are popular, but because I consider them to be just and well founded; and also because I am morally convinced, that when slavery is abolished, we shall have the produce of our colonial possessions sent to us of better quality, in greater quantity, and at a much cheaper rate. Already, Sir, the once towering fabric of this detested system shakes to its foundation. Every meeting of this nature hastens its final doom; and I trust to God that we shall soon have to hail, with one consecrated heart, and with one voice, the achievement of its dissolution, and the performance of its funeral obsequies, when we may be able to exclaim, with every sanctified feeling of the soul—"Ashes to ashes—dust to dust!" The rev. gentleman resumed his seat amidst very great applause.

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